

ASREN

المنظمة العربية لشبكات البحث العلمي والتعليم
Arab States Research and Education Network

NEWSLETTER

Issue1 - August 2011

ASREN

Abu-Ghazaleh

**Announces the Official
Registration of ASREN
in Germany**

EUMEDCONNECT2

**EUMEDCONNECT is going
further to a third phase**

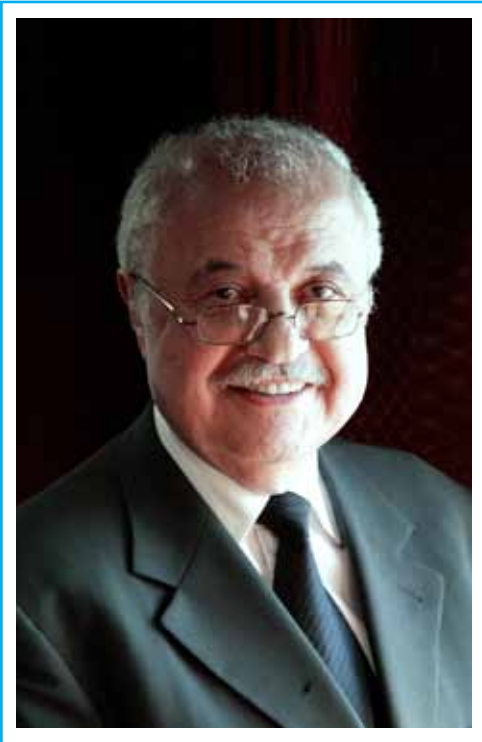
DANTE

Chain

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Forward



HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh

“In a world where borders are becoming increasingly undefined, and collaboration is becoming more important than competition, we believe that this widening of our present collaboration through ASREN e-Infrastructure is for everyone’s benefit and that overlooking this would be losing an opportunity to bring the Arab world closer. The joint work on developing ASREN with the League of Arab States, Arab NRENs, and the European Union has contributed largely to the formation of ASREN legal structure, operations, and implementation,”

ASREN

- As a concept: Pan-Arab e-Infrastructure to connect all universities, educational institutions, and research centers in the Arab world to each other, to the Mediterranean, Europe, North America, and to the rest of the world through a high speed Research and Education network, towards a new era of science.
- As an initiative: It started at the Mediterranean regional level with EUMEDCONNECT/ EUMEDGrid Projects co-funded by the European Commission to “support the development of e-Infrastructure in the Mediterranean area and promoting scientific collaboration”
- Brief history:
 - EUMEDCONNECT1, 2004; EUMEDCONNECT2, 2008
 - PAN Arab Network, 2005
 - Rome Declaration, 2006 – CAMREN Concept
 - NAP - the Network Access Point, 2007
 - Evolution to ASREN, then announced in March 2010 in Brussels
- In December 2010, formal launch of ASREN at the League of Arab States
- In December 2010, formal launch of ASREN at the League of Arab States
- In June 2011, ASREN officially registered in Germany as a non-profit Arab States Research and Education Network
 - Abu-Ghazaleh & Consulting GmbH
 - Jordan University Network
 - Moroccan CNRST

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Abu-Ghazaleh Announces the Official Registration of ASREN in Germany

ASREN pledges to promote research and education in the Arab world through building Pan-Arab e-Infrastructures

June 3, 2011

DUSSELDORF, Germany – Following its successful inauguration in December 2010 at the League of Arab States Headquarters, the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) has been officially registered in Dusseldorf, Germany with Abu-Ghazaleh & Co. Consulting GmbH, Jordanian Universities Network, and Moroccan Research and Education Network (CNRST) as initial shareholders. The registration took place at the Notary Office of the district of Dusseldorf Higher Regional Court [Oberlandes-gericht Dusseldorf]

The registration of ASREN is a result of continuing dedicated efforts made by the Arab National Research and Education Networks and with Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization's generous financial contribution and technical and legal support. ASREN is now born as an independent and not-for-profit organization with a mission to implement, manage and extend sustainable Pan-Arab e-Infrastructures dedicated for Research and Education connecting National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in the Arab countries. Further NRENs are expected to become shareholders in the coming months.

It is building on the EU-funded EUMEDCONNECT2 research and education network which already provides connectivity in the Mediterranean region for innovative collaborations including high energy physics, earthquake analysis and agricultural research. The objective of ASREN is to further boost scientific research and cooperation in member countries through the provision of world-class e-infrastructures and e-services with ASREN's role on building consolidated Pan Arab e-Infrastructure, developing Arab NRENs, maintaining interoperability between NRENs, and creating collaboration venues in education and research among Arab institutions

ASREN official website launched

ASREN has launched its official website that includes all related information about the national research and education networks and EUMED projects. The main elements of the website are:

- ASREN Synopsis; with information about ASREN, Research and Education and partners.
- ASREN programs; includes information about research and development projects.
- ASREN Media; contains the past activities of ASREN, updated news, publications, meetings calendar, and all information needed about the upcoming events.
- ASREN Network; with information about connection models and policies.

Some of the content on the website is still under development, www.asrenorg.net.

ASREN Meetings update

1. Together with EUMEDCONNECT2 in Düsseldorf

The meeting was held on March 30, 2011 to discuss the registration update of ASREN, with its main shareholders.

Together with EUMEDCONNECT2 project partners, discussions focused on:

- ASREN articles of association, shareholders, and legal structure
- updates of partner status/plans in connectivity and usage
- EUMEDCONNECT2 services and activities, including agreement to use partner reserves to extend all current connectivity services on current terms
- EUMEDCONNECT3 proposal to EC with different models of operations, including work packages and activities
- ASREN planning, activities, operations, finances, knowledge transfers, and role of ASREN in EUMEDCONNECT3

2. Together with EUMEDCONNECT2 in Amman

The General Assembly of ASREN held its first meeting in Amman on July 26, 2011 under the Chairmanship of HE Dr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, Chairman of ASREN. The meeting was attended by Dr. Sultan Abu Orabi, Secretary-General of the Association of Arab Universities, Dr. AbdulRahim Hunaiti, Chairman of JUNET, and Mr. David West, Projects Manager in the Delivery of Advanced Network Technology to Europe (DANTE) as well as representatives of national networks in Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Morocco and Turkey.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh extended his gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein for the Royal Patronage of the first international platform on integrating Arab e-infrastructures in a global environment that will be

organized by ASREN in Amman during December 12-14, 2011 in cooperation with EUMEDCONNECT Network, the US Research and Education Network in the Middle East, and the Association of Arab Universities.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh praised the role played and the achievements made by ASREN in such a short time, particularly its efforts in establishing Arab e-infrastructures to support research and education and promote effective participation in the field of e-sciences.

The research focused on urgency of work with the Arab countries to support the establishment of national research and education networks and connect them to the Arab regional network, the establishment of which is supported by the European Union through the EUMEDCONNECT Project. Subsequently, the national research and education networks will be connected to the international regional networks and cooperation with the Association of Arab Universities will be enhanced.

Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh emphasized his support to establish the Arab regional network, and extended his thanks to the European Union for its support to the 3rd phase of the EUMEDCONNECT Project, through which the practical and technological procedures of ASREN will be supported.

ASREN active participation

1. CHAIN/ EUMEDGrid Support meetings - Italy

ASREN involvement in CHAIN project- which aims to coordinate and leverage e-Infrastructure efforts in Europe to other regions including Asia, Mediterranean, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and establish operational, organizational, and interoperability principles. Activities of CHAIN focus on:

- Collecting information on e-Infrastructure - worldwide,
- Extracting and analyzing these information, then finding synergies towards different kinds of resources, middleware, bandwidth, common things, etc
- Defining policies and building a roadmap for interconnectivity, interoperability (EGI standards) for links with other regional e-infrastructures, proposing EU middleware software
- Simple issues, multiple infrastructure, compatible services, interoperation at the management level, uniformity

ASREN involvement in EPIKH project- which promotes use of specific portal/ education specific network not website, share and participate for access to resources infrastructure, test-bed projects using Grid services,

concept of security, federation identity for ease of use and accountability of resources, etc. ASREN's support will be in:

- Organizing with EPIKH schools to bring technology to curricula, help government realize total investment being much less than a local investment for institutions within the country. Proposals of small research programs to gridify their applications learn how to run the applications that are deployed, areas and communities, common applications, etc.
- Offering administrative training to professionals at the ASREN level with the concept of NOC
- Developing some kind of a degree program (similar to an Executive MBA) in Grid/e-Infrastructure with a list of courses. The degree would be jointly offered between EU/Arab Universities.
- Organizing workshops, awareness sessions and focus on the applications of e-infrastructure.

2. AfREN/ AfNIC/ AfNOG meetings - Tanzania

- Briefing on ASREN
- Developing network connectivity, possibly with nodes originating in Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and UAE – connecting to Europe, US, Africa, East Asia, Central Asia.
- Cooperating actively with UbuntuNet alliance and WACREN
- Inviting the African research and education networks to participate in the ASREN upcoming events.
- Inviting ASREN to a conference of rectors platform to advocate support regional interconnection (UbuntuNet alliance, WACREN, ASREN) to discuss the need for NREN, need bandwidth, how to handle traffic of students, using smart phones, access Inter- university connection.
- Collaborating through infrastructure interconnection and interaction on common issues needed, for applications among schools which require QoS
- Focusing on information sharing, cyber-security, cloud computing, community development
- Developing information sharing systems and local content portals
- Focusing on public private partnership and developing business plans with sustainability

3. EUMEDGrid support workshop "Grids and Modeling: Application" - Lebanon

ASREN has been represented in the opening session of the conference that was hosted by Saint-Joseph University in Lebanon, main items:

- Research activities related to communities and evidence of need for high bandwidth connectivity and grid computing

- Workshop roundtable discussions on developing Lebanese NREN.
 - Importance of involving CNRS – National Center of Scientific Research in Lebanon, as the point of contact for a Lebanese NREN
 - ESCWA Convening power and ASREN concept can be as part of ICT strategy, policy, and governance and to promote the concept of linking e-infrastructure between institutions and universities in the Arab region.
4. Sharing Knowledge across the Mediterranean - Malta
- The history, objectives, functions and strategic plan of ASREN were presented and discussed in the event.
 - ASREN support was the main point of discussion in the meeting with Prof. Robert Klapich, President of Sharing Knowledge Foundation.
 - Collaboration opportunities were discussed with representatives of WACREN, UBUNTUNET and AfricaConnect
5. TERENA Networking Conference TNC2011 - Czech Republic
- Establish collaboration between Internet2 and ASREN, and join efforts to support the objectives of ASREN and connect the Arab researchers to their counterparts in USA.
 - Establish collaboration between Red-CLARA, the Latin America RREN and ASREN, and benefit from the experience of RedCLARA
 - TERENA to support the establishment of ASREN at the regional level
6. Networking event – United Arab Emirates
- Establish collaboration with ICT Fund as part of the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRA). The idea is to support ANKABUTs participation in ASREN and EUMEDCONNECT3 and ASREN activities in general.
 - Establish collaboration with the National Research Foundation to support the activities of ASREN.
 - Inviting ANKABUT to join ASREN as a shareholder, and be part of its activities in developing the Pan Arab e-Infrastructure and in the EUMEDCONNECT3 tender.
7. Spring Internet2 SIG Meeting - Washington DC
- ASREN briefing online to the Internet SIG meeting held at the World Bank with high level attendees, including Internet2 users from around the world.

8. Networking event - Egypt

- Egypt University Network (EUN) physical infrastructure is connecting universities through VPN network with large capacity purchased for each university via Egypt Telecom
- EUN intensive experience in managing R&E networks and its services, including a centralize e-Learning, Digital Library, MIS system for all universities
- EUN bids for connectivity through the commercial network, and would benefit from EUMEDCONNECT3 as a beneficiary partner
- EUN is very supportive to join ASREN, although their participation is still pending high authority approval.
- ASREN to focus on services and applications with details of topology, ASREN/EUMEDCONNECT3 connectivity model, and cooperative services

1st International Platform on Integrating Arab e-infrastructure in a Global Environment (e-AGE 2011) **Amman, Jordan on December 12-14, 2011**

Under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, ASREN will hold its 1st International Platform on Integrating Arab e-infrastructure in a Global Environment (e-AGE 2011) in Amman, Jordan on December 12-14, 2011.

Integrating Arab e-Infrastructure in a Global Environment aims among other things, to promote opportunities for cooperation between networks of research and education in the Arab countries, Europe and North America; to launch the third phase of the EUMEDCONNECT project; and to expand the framework of effective participation of e- infrastructure linking the Arab Organizations for research and education to the world. The platform will include three regional events that focus on research and education e-Infrastructures:

- The fourth Event on Euro-Mediterranean e-Infrastructure
- The annual meeting of the US Internet2 Special Interest Group, Middle East
- The first annual meeting of ASREN

Moreover special sessions will be dedicated to specific domains such as Digital Cultural Heritage, Global Warming, Economic Crisis, Climate Change, and Energy.

We are expecting over 200 delegates to attend the event, among them, Ministers of Higher Education and Ministers of ICT in the Arab countries, ICT experts, policy and decision makers, heads of stakeholder institutions and international organizations, experts of e-infrastructures of the Euro-Mediterranean, Pan-Arab, Africa, Asia, and North American regions, academia and active researchers, together with high-level representatives from the League of Arab States, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Commission (EC) Directorate General Information Society and Media (DG INFSO), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

ASREN Shareholders

1. TAG-Org



Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization founded in 1972 (TAG-ORG) is an international professional services group, working through its 73 offices in the Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan, India, Cyprus, Russia and China. It has representative offices in Europe and North America and non-exclusive strategic alliance agreements with various networks and individual firms thus enabling it to choose a firm best suited to its clients needs in virtually every country in the world.

It currently offers a composite range of professional services covering Accounting; External Audit; Internal Audit; Corporate Governance; Taxation; Educational Consultancy; Economic and Strategic studies; Management Advisory Services; Professional and Technical Training; Technology Transfer Project Management; Real Estate Management; Investors and Business Advisory Services; Human Resources and Recruitment Services; E-Government; E-Commerce; E-Education; IT and Security Audit; Webmastering and Web Design; Professional Interpretation and Translation; Website Arabization: Domain Names Registration; ICT Strategic Planning; ERP Consulting Services; IT and Internet Skills Training and Examinations; Intellectual Property News Agency; IP Business and Asset Valuation and Branding Services; IP Registration and Protection; Intellectual Property Renewals; IPR Protection and Management; Legal Services (Solicitors and Attorneys); and Public Offering.

2. JUNet



The Jordanian Universities Network Company (JUNet) is a nonprofit company with limited liability which has been founded and funded by the public universities to manage the network and provide services to these universities. JUNet is managed by a board of directors from the presidents of the public universities.

JUNet is considered as the National Research and Education Network. Currently, 11 Public Universities and 15 Community Colleges are connected to this network. JUNet is planning to connect the other Private Universities, National Research Centers to the network to participate in the national learning and research activities.

The specific objectives of the Jordanian University Research and Learning Network are:

- To provide the Jordanian Research and Learning (R&L) institutions with a first class TCP/IP network which will

facilitate communications, collaboration, experimentation, and learning.

- To encourage students, faculty members, and researchers to use high speed networks to increase productivity and foster a culture of innovation.
- To develop a Jordanian Research and Learning community.
- To provide a platform for connecting the Jordan R&L community to the global R&L community.

In general, the main focus of JUNet is satisfying the common needs of the public universities.

3. CNRST- Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technique (Morocco)



CNRST is the National Centre for Scientific and Technical Research, it is a public institution. Within the framework of the government's policy, the CNRST's assignment is to promote, develop, and value scientific research, according to the country's cultural and socioeconomic needs. It acquires a central role by providing universities and research centers with advanced tools and infrastructures that meet their needs.

The CNRST is providing several services to the Moroccan research community, among them are the following:

- Moroccan Academic and Research Wide Area Network (Marwan): it consists of providing, deploying and maintaining the necessary network infrastructure for universities and research centers.
- National Grid Infrastructure (MaGrid): In the framework of the government support to scientific research and to scientists, the CNRST was charged to build a national grid infrastructure dedicated to intensive computing and to data storage.
- Institut Marocain pour l'Information Scientifique et Technique (IMIST): It aims at providing the researcher and industrial communities with scientific and technical documentations to assist them in their activities. Several documentation databases were implemented for this purpose;
- Provision of a set of technical (hardware and software) infrastructure providing several services to the academic and industrial sectors (chemistry, material science, biology...).

The CNRST is also active in several international projects and collaborations, and is also involved in several worldwide cooperation contracts with several countries: Belgium, France, Spain, USA and many others.

EUMEDCONNECT



EUMEDCONNECT has provided a regional network for seven North African and Middle Eastern countries since 2004, serving two million users in 700 institutions, and connecting them to Europe and globally via GÉANT with EC funding. Researchers in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia in many fields including e-science, archaeology and e-learning have benefited from the high capacity and wide reach of this first and only Mediterranean research and education network. EUMEDCONNECT2 has strongly supported the establishment of ASREN and works closely with ASREN day to day and is an adviser to ASREN's Board. At an ASREN event in December 2010, the EC announced funding for a further three-year-phase of EUMEDCONNECT starting in the second half of 2011 to continue the existing regional research and education network and to support ASREN to become a self-sustaining organization.

For further information, please visit www.eumedconnect2.net

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EUMEDCONNECT is going further to a third phase

Starting from funding of the EUMEDCONNECT Project that started in 2004 which connected the Arab MED countries to the pan European Research Network GEANT, a second phase of the project –EUMEDCONNECT2–was also funded by the EC starting from November 2008 and will come to an end in August 2011. This project also provided regional connectivity to the Arab MED countries to the GEANT network.

As an achievement of the ASREN Launch Meeting in Cairo, December 8-9, 2011 under the patronage of HE Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, it was agreed by the EC to further fund the project to a third phase –EUMEDCONNECT3, The EC will fund the project and contract with DANTE and ASREN as project partners to implement the EUMEDCONNECT3 network.

Since then, ASREN participated in all EUMEDCONNECT 2 and 3 activities. As for EUMEDCONNECT3, ASREN participated in the preparation of project plan and the EUMEDCONNECT3 network tender. The tender that will

be released by DANTE and ASREN, invited qualified operators and cable providers to submit proposals to provide connectivity and circuits to connect the Arab MED partners. The tender seeks for opportunities to interconnect the Arab MED countries together to GEANT2. The EUMEDCONNECT3 tender has now closed and announcements about new connectivity will be made in due course.

DANTE



Based in Cambridge, UK, DANTE (Delivery of Advanced Network Technology to Europe) plans, builds and operates advanced networks for research and education. It is owned by European NRENs (National Research and Education Networks), and works in partnership with them and in cooperation with the European Commission. DANTE provides the data communications infrastructure essential to the development of the global research community.

For further information, please visit www.dante.net

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EPIKH



The “knowledge triangle” refers to the interaction between research & development, education and innovation, which are key drivers of a knowledge-based society. In the European Union, it also refers to an attempt to better link together these key concepts with research and innovation already highlighted by the development of the Lisbon Strategy. The EPIKH project aims to “connect”, through the adoption and use of Grid training infrastructures, along with that of e-Infrastructures, research & development and innovation with education in order to increase the number of users and scientific applications of these platforms.

The strategic objectives of the EPIKH project are to:

- Reinforce the impact of e-Infrastructures in scientific research defining and delivering stimulating program of thematic educational events, including Grid Schools and High Performance Computing courses.

- Broaden the engagement in e-Science activities and collaborations both geographically and across disciplines.
- These ambitious goals translated into the following specific actions:
- Spreading the knowledge about the "Grid Paradigm" to all potential
- Users: both system administrators and application developers through an extensive training program.
- Easing the access of the trained people to the e-Infrastructures existing in the areas of action of the project.
- Fostering the establishment of scientific collaborations among the countries/continents involved in the project.

For further information, please visit www.epikh.eu

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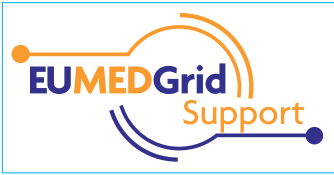
CHAIN



The CHAIN project aims to further coordinate and leverage the experience of several e-Infrastructure projects and initiatives addressing various regions of the world and specifically those emerging in Asia and Africa, but also Latin America and the Mediterranean. CHAIN focuses on the harmonized and optimized interaction model for e-Infrastructure and specifically Grid interfaces between Europe and the rest of the world. The interoperation among regional infrastructures both at the management and organizational levels will be one of the major goals.

A questionnaire has been prepared to collect up to date information about the state of the art in all relevant regions. Sections are covering the existing infrastructure, deployed middleware, existing and anticipated interoperation with other regions/grids, organizational setup and policies and all the information that is considered relevant for the analysis. Two streams for collecting input (target audiences) are planned: a Regional level, a sort of a summary for the whole region (one per region) to be handled by the Regional Grid Representatives and a National level, requesting information about the NGI (if there is any), managed by NGI Representatives. The first results are expected to be available by end of July 2011. The full analysis will take more time and the plan is to have it finished by September 2011.

EUMEDGRID-Support



The EUMEDGRID-Support project aims at building on the successful outcomes of EUMEDGRID (2006-2008), and it spotlights Europe and the Mediterranean and Middle East regions through an open dialogue aimed at increasing stakeholder and community awareness on the fundamental importance of e-Infrastructures with the ultimate goal of ensuring long-term sustainability. The work already done in the EUMEDGRID project has led to a pilot Grid Infrastructure which covers almost all the Mediterranean area.

EUMEDGRID-Support partners have also participated in the process of building the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) that is going to become a reference institution for the development of sustainable e-Infrastructures in the region.

- Sustainability is one of the most relevant objectives of the project and here the activity has followed multiple paths converging into a list of coordinated actions:
- Widening the number and the variety of scientific domains enabled to make use of the e-Infrastructure and increasing their level of participation with schools and workshops organized in collaboration with the partners and the EPIKH Project.
- Awaking the interest of policy makers and stakeholders for e-Infrastructures and their sustainability through the organization of the 3rd EUMED Event targeted to these objectives.
- Disseminating the opportunities and benefits of e-Infrastructures in the region underlining the achievements of the European projects and specifically those of EUMEDGRID-Support and EUMEDCONNECT2.
- Creating the Africa ROC portal an initiative spawn by the project and supported also by SAGrid (South Africa Grid), CHAIN and EPIKH projects.
- Finally, coordinating the project's activities with those of other relevant projects such as MIRA, EUIndiaGrid2, LinkSCEEM, GENESI-DEC, etc. in order to obtain synergistic effects that may facilitate the sustainability process.

The success of these activities will be followed in the next months by an EUMEDGRID User Forum in September in Lyon co-located with the EGI Technical Forum and the support to schools and events joined with the tuning of infrastructure services and the improvement of the Africa ROC portal.